



Portrayal of Ecofeminism: A Study of Anuradha Roy's *The Folded Earth*

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ABSTRACT

Eco feminism examines the connection between women and nature. Eco feministsexamine the effect of gender categories in order to demonstrate the way in which social norms exert unjust dominance over woman and nature. It sees the domination of nature and the exploitation of women. Eco feminism uses the parallels between the oppression of nature and the oppression of women as a way to highlight the idea that both must be understood in order to properly recognize how they are connected. Anuradha Roy's *The Folded Earth* portrays the exploitation of women and nature in the patriarchal society.

Keywords

Eco feminism, women, nature, exploitation, oppression.

Anuradha Roy is an award-winning novelist from India among the thirteen novelists, long listed for the Man Booker Prize. *The Folded Earth* is the second novel of Roy which won the Economist Crossword Prize and also long-listed for the 2011 Man Booker Prize. She is the co-founder of Permanent Black, an independent press.

The story arises with the folded memories of Maya who lives in the foot hills of Himalaya, Ranikhet. The story perceptibly portrays the distress life of Maya whose husband has died while trekking a mountain. Maya is deserted by her father because of marrying Michael, a Christian. So her father keeps her away from them due to his reputation in the society. After the death of her husband her life represented as the place of confinement as far as she reaches Ranikhet. "He is with me, but not with me" (TFE 6). She says that "I had been out all day on scorching streets, walking at random, getting onto buses without looking where they were going, pausing at parks, shops, then

walking on, until shops shut and traffic thinned, and the streets grew too empty for a woman alone” (TFE 10-11). It reflects the loneliness of Maya. She moves to Ranikhet and gets a job in St. Hilda’s school with the help of the priest, Father Joseph. “I was going to be two thousand kilometres from anything I knew, but that was just numbers. In truth the distance was beyond measurement” (TFE 15).

Ranikhet is an isolated village until the arrival of the politicians. Ranikhet village people have adjoining kinship with nature and neglect other things. So that Maya selected Ranikhet, an excel place to think no more of her nuisance life. “ On every side there are mountains and forests, stretching many miles, ... you can see the five pyramids of the PachaChuli, which are at Nepal’s door”(TFE 16).

Maya has a strange feeling towards Veer, who is a climber. But he does not have such feelings. “I was restless and confused about the reason for it. I knew mentioned Veer in conversation far too much but could not stop me” (TFE 46). Later, Maya comes to know that he is the last trekking companion of her husband Michael. At the end Maya realizes that Veer has been misusing her to fulfill his needs. Maya’s husband has a cherish bond with nature “My rival in love was not a woman but a mountain range” (TFE 6). Maya is entirely different from Michael because she fails to escape from her past. “I could no longer imagine living anywhere else. Though I cannot know precisely when it happened, a time had come when I became hill- person who was only at peace where the earth rose and fell in waves like the sea” (TFE 21).

Anuradha Roy characterizes the hill station thus:

In the hills the sky is circumscribed. Its fluid blue is cupped in the palm and while there is a feeling of limitless distance, we have at the same time the sense that here on our hill is where life begins and ends. Here is where sky begins and ends, and if there are other places, they have skies different from our sky” (TFE 16).

Maya affirms that it is tough to have kinship amidst humans and nature.

Michael’s yearnings made me understand that how it is that some people have the mountains in them while some have the sea. The ocean people exerts an inexorable pull over sea-people wherever they are- in a bright- lit, inland city or the dead centre of a desert- and stand at its immense, earth- dissolving edge, straightaway calmed. Hill- people, even if they are born in flatlands, cannot be parted for long from the mountains. Anywhere else is exile. Anywhere else, the ground is too flat, the air too dense, the trees too broad- leaved for beauty for beauty. The colour of the light is all wrong, the sounds nothing but noise. (TFE6-7)

Roy is so dramatic in describing the loneliness of Maya as

In the absolute darkness the sky felt larger, the stars came down, the trees grew blacker. The lopsided half moon was trapped in a cage of branches. Now that I was alone again, a corner of the terror I had felt during the slideshow edged its way back (TFE 86).

Charu, niece of Puran gets solace with her cow named Gouri apart from anyone: “ Gouri had come as a large-eyed, timid, sweet-faced calf when Charu was a girl and whenever she was troubled or scolded by her grandmother she still ran to Gouri and buried her face in the cow’s warm flanks” (35).

Charu leaves Ranikhet to meet her lover Kundan Singh in Delhi. She describes the atmosphere of the Delhi as

Here the sky was the slate grey colour of village roofs, only dirtier. You could not see far at all, just till the next few towering pillars of buildings, which stood close together like walls with square holes. They looked the same, and as if they would fall any moment. Beyond, there was a haze of smoke (TFE 214).

Puran understands the needs of animals. “He could talk to animals, but people left him confused and mumbling” (TFE 59). Ama expresses her views about Puran as

He is senseless about his deer as about everything else. Lunatic fool giggles and whispers to it like it’s his lover, and feeds it all the grain I store for the hens. Between his deer and Charu’s dog, I am losing all the money I earn from selling milk” (TFE 119).

Puran’s small deer Rani is so beautiful: “Exquisite in its delicate beauty, its long eyelashes fencing in the pools of brown” (TFE 69). Puran brings an isolated baby deer and take care of it with great affection. But Mr. Chauhan village administrator takes the baby deer to the zoo where it dies ultimately grief struck without taking food.

Diwan Sahib landlord of Maya tells that the children of the local school to be fortunate for persisting in Ranikhet. He says that “They must put their ears to the earth and rocks and hear them breathe. Because here in Ranikhet the rocks do breathe” (TFE 168). Diwan Sahib perceives Puran’s love for animals: “ Puran’s affinity to animals was lost treasure. Puran was the sanest of us all, because animals knew whom to trust. They were imbeciles themselves who called Puran half witted” (TFE 73).

Roy elegantly describes the clouds as:

I thought I could hear the earth creaking on its tilted axis, moving a little further in the opposite direction each day, towards the cold months. Very slowly, but it did move, and the wet, grey, solid sky which had come down to live around houses and treetops through the months of rain

thinned to uncover an airy concentration of blueness ... luxuriated in the sunlight and heard nothing but the chirring of cicadas.(TFE 205)

Roy has a talent of giving life to the non-living thing. Ranikhet also plays its role like one of the character in the novel because of its relationship with humans and the nature. “ When the clouds came lower and lower, to rest on our hills, they wiped away the mountains on the other side of the valley and bleached the distant of trees of colour, turning them into charcoaled lines on the grey-white sky” (TFE 154). Diwan Sahib tells that they are blessed to live in Ranikhet because the place is encompassed by rocks that breathe. “This is forest now- it is a park, it is what is called a resource, a factory. It belongs to people who owned it before, nor the animals and plants that lived in it” (TFE 178).

CONCLUSION

So it is observed that Roy is so immensely particular in the ambience and was a lover of nature and so conscious about giving meager details about things. This aspect is directly linked to the concept of Ecofeminism where man is the one who abuses nature and women and eventually disturbs the harmony which drives the world. The women are always abused by men of certain sort. Roy is not happy about it and she has written about it in *The Folded Earth*.

REFERENCES

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